

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
Houston Refining Fire - Removal Polrep
Initial and Final Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region VI

Subject: POLREP #1
Initial and Final
Houston Refining Fire

Houston, TX
Latitude: 29.7096957 Longitude: -95.2362304

To: Anthony Buck, TCEQ
Ronnie Crossland, USEPA R6 Superfund Division

From: Eric Delgado, OSC

Date: 3/16/2017

Reporting Period: 03/15/2017

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	Contract Number:
D.O. Number:	Action Memo Date:
Response Authority: CERCLA	Response Type: Emergency
Response Lead: PRP	Incident Category: Removal Action
NPL Status: Non NPL	Operable Unit:
Mobilization Date: 3/15/2017	Start Date: 3/15/2017
Demob Date: 3/15/2017	Completion Date: 3/15/2017
CERCLIS ID:	RCRIS ID:
ERNS No.:	State Notification:
FPN#:	Reimbursable Account #:

1.1.1 Incident Category

Fire: Active Production Facility

1.1.2 Site Description

1.1.2.1 Location

The Houston Refinery is located at 12000 Lawndale Street, Houston, Harris County, Texas (29.7096957 latitude, -95.2362304 longitude). The site is a 268,000-barrel-per-day refinery that covers approximately 700 acres on the south bank of the Houston Ship Channel. The west portion of the facility is bordered by Simms Bayou. The facility is located at the city limits of Houston and Pasadena, Texas.

The facility began operation in 1918 and is currently converting very heavy high-sulfur crude oil into fuels. They also produce heating oil, jet fuel, olefins feedstocks, aromatics, lubricants and petroleum coke.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

The fire occurred in a cooling tower that provided cooling to a Sulfur Recovery Unit and a Gas Unit. The fire was contained in the cooling tower by facility fire fighting contained the fire with the support of the Houston Fire Department. As the unit was not in contact with hydrocarbons only particulates were expected to be released, although monitoring for VOCs and other combustion products (carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide) were conducted no detections above background were observed.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

At 1930 on 15 March 2017, a fire began in a cooling tower that serviced one of the H₂S removal Units and a Gas Unit at the facility. The cooling tower was a 12 cell tower about the size of a hockey field. The cooling towers were located in northeast portion of the facility toward the east fence. The fire was reported at 2110 hours. TCEQ responded to the site and requested EPA assistance in perimeter monitoring.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

The TCEQ arrived at the site at 2210 hours and was informed the fire was out. The EPA Team conducted perimeter monitoring, based on the wind direction, from the ESE, on the west side of the facility. Monitoring was conducted with a four gas meter (MultiRae) at several locations and no readings above background were detected. The MultiRae monitored for oxygen, carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide and volatile organic compounds.

Three locations were monitored:

1. Lawndale and access road to port facility on Simms Bayou (29.709397 latitude, -95.250577 longitude).
2. Gate on access road to port facility on Simms Bayou (29.711095, latitude, -95.252155 longitude).

3. In neighborhood to west of facility, post office on corner of San Saba and Manchester Streets (29.717943, latitude, -95.274589 longitude).

Facility representatives reported that the fire destroyed the cooling tower and the 2 units that the tower serviced were being shutdown due to lack of cooling. Perimeter monitoring was concluded at 1106 hours and the EPA Team was directed by the OSC to demobilize from the site.

2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

Work with the TCEQ and monitor by phone.

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

None

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

None

2.2.2 Issues

2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

No information available at this time.

3. Participating Entities

3.1 Unified Command

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

City of Houston Fire Department (Stand by)

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)

4. Personnel On Site

LyondellBasell Fire Fighting Crew

TCEQ

EPA START

5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

6. Additional sources of information

6.1 Internet location of additional information/report

https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=12083

6.2 Reporting Schedule

7. Situational Reference Materials

No information available at this time.